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Our Protestant Heritage

THREE SERMONS BY
W. WOFFORD T. DUNCAN

AT
EMORY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



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W. WOFFORD T. DUNCAN



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TO MY OLD FRIENDS WHO CONSTITUTED
THE CONGREGATIONS IN THREE
CHURCHES TO WHICH I HAVE GIVEN
TWENTY YEARS OF HAPPY SERVICE,
FIRST CHURCH, SOUTH NORWALK, CON-
NECTICUT; SAINT JOHN'S, NEW RO-
CHELLE, NEW YORK, AND JANES CHURCH,
BROOKLYN; AND TO MY NEW FRIENDS,
THE PEOPLE OF EMORY CHURCH, PITTS-
BURGH, FOR WHOM THESE SERMONS
WERE PREPARED, THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

THESE sermons were suggested by the publication of sixty-five paid advertisements in Pittsburgh daily newspapers announcing Roman Catholic views of Christianity and the church and discussing questions in dispute between Romanism and Protestantism. Protestant rebuttal by the same method of paid advertising was, to a limited extent, and after great hesitancy, published by one newspaper and refused by another, that other also discontinuing the Roman Catholic advertisements the moment Protestants attempted reply. The Protestant people were greatly interested and an unusual opportunity was thus afforded the ministers to present to their own people Protestant doctrines and ecclesiastical viewpoints which at another time would seem tame or academic. Believing in the principle that the moment of interested attention should be seized for the impartation of

knowledge, many pastors have embraced the opportunity to clarify the thinking of their own people and such Roman Catholics as might attend, by the emphasis of Protestant fundamentals without either rabid denunciation or timid apology.

The following statement of purpose was used to announce this series:

OUR ROMAN CATHOLIC FRIENDS have made necessary this series. They have earnestly and publicly proclaimed in Pittsburgh during recent weeks that Protestantism is not scripturally nor rationally sound. It is their privilege to express their honest convictions, but such expression challenges Protestantism to reply. The responsibility for some reply is with them. To ignore the challenge is to admit Protestantism to be what they think it is. We gladly embrace the opportunity they furnish to strengthen the faith of Protestants, for Protestantism flourishes on full, open, honest, and friendly discussion.

WE HAVE NO PURPOSE TO CONVERT ROMAN CATHOLICS to Protestantism. There are

more than four times as many Protestants and other non-Romanists in America as there are Roman Catholics, and with these Protestantism is concerned. However, we cordially invite Roman Catholics to attend. Protestants freely attended the recent Paulist Fathers' lectures without criticism from their church, and we invite our Roman friends to return the compliment.

THE PREACHER HAS ONLY THE KINDEST FEELINGS toward individual Roman Catholics and has no desire to disturb the faith of the honestly devout. What he may say in criticism of their church will be said in the same spirit that moves him and other Protestant ministers to freely criticize Protestantism from time to time as they feel that there is need.

TO BELIEVE A LIE IN ANY REALM IS HURTFUL. *To believe a lie in religion may entail irreparable loss.* Jesus said: "*I am the Truth.*"

I

THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF PROTESTANTISM

Text: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8. 32.

No age fully appreciates its indebtedness to the past. We are evermore tempted to walk upon the walls of our own Babylon and say, "Is not this great Babylon which we have built?" The principles of thought and action which have been born with us, the atmosphere of intellectual, moral, and spiritual freedom which was breathed into us when we became living souls constitute a rich heritage for which we are indebted to those who have gone before. This heritage has come down to us because our Protestant fathers fought on bloody fields of martial encounter or laboriously contended on bloodless plains of polemic strife. We do not realize the vast difference in our lives if we had been born in a land where the right to think for oneself on matters religious and

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ecclesiastical had been denied or even persistently challenged. We do not always appreciate the difference between a land where the free development of the mind in its search for truth is promoted, and a land where mental assimilation of prescribed religious and ecclesiastical doctrines is the aim rather than mental cultivation. It is one thing to breathe with our birth the air of free inquiry and research; it is quite another thing to breathe the atmosphere of apprehension toward anything that resembles intellectual adventure into realms religious. It is one thing to inherit the conviction that the faculties of the human mind are to be trusted and that intellectual processes which have proved successful when applied to physical science and commercial life may be applied with equal success to the religious life, and it is quite another thing to view with suspicion all normal procedure of the mind in matters religious, believing that unless there is ecclesiastical dictation, utter confusion and alienation from divine truth will ensue.

But our American heritage consists not only in the fact that we now enjoy intellectual freedom, but in that, for many generations, our fathers have enjoyed and exercised such freedom. If this freedom had come only with the advent of the present generation, then a much more limited bequest would have been ours. You cannot change a nation over night and the passage from darkness to light is always accompanied by the twilight of the dawn. Though the people that sit in darkness see a great light, they do not pass out of the shadows till several new generations have been born. It means much, therefore, that as an American people we receive our Protestant heritage from generations preceding which have also enjoyed it. There is a different situation, for example, in the Philippine Islands. The American flag floats there, it is true, but America has inherited a state of intellectual and moral darkness which decades of mediæval misrule have created, and while constitutional American liberty is guaranteed to all, yet many will for a long time sit

in the shadows because their ancestors have not enjoyed a Protestant heritage. When Paul after his arrest in Jerusalem told the chief captain that he was a Roman citizen, the captain observed, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," and Paul answered, "But I was free born." So may every American citizen born in the free air of Protestant liberty exclaim with gratitude, "I was free born!"

It is this Protestant heritage which we propose to defend in the present series of sermons. We have no desire to fight over again battles of a past day, nor to revive ancient animosities which have happily been laid to rest. People sometimes ask: "Do you think there will be a war in this country between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants?" and we invariably answer "No," for we believe with Tennyson that "the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe." But by that common sense we do not mean that easygoing indifferentism which calls all religious strife of the past the mere raving of religious fanaticism

and which forgets that the very opportunity for indifference, which so many embrace, is due to the triumph of principles for which our fathers died. By "common sense" we mean that distribution of intelligent conviction to all people whereby they shall be prompt to oppose every movement, however subtle, which seeks to undermine the foundations of Protestant liberty. If such common sense shall not abound, and the pulpit and the press, because of false liberality or fear of religious controversy, shall promote popular ignorance of Protestant principles, then violence and even war may result. It is therefore in the interest of peace and for the prevention of religious strife that we speak on these themes. Protestantism is essentially democratic, and just as democracy cannot survive without a high degree of intelligence, free speech, and popular illumination, so Protestantism asks only that she shall have the light, that she shall be granted the privilege of intelligent and friendly controversy, and that for her and for opposing systems of belief the Master's

prophecy shall be fulfilled and there "shall be nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known."

We come now to consider the intellectual heritage of Protestantism. The central truth on which it rests is the right of private judgment; that is, the right of every man to think as profoundly as he may and as independently as he will upon every question of life, including the most important of all themes, namely, religion. It is well for us to observe here that the right of private judgment does not involve two things which are sometimes thought to be included. It does not include disregard of all authority. It does not mean that when a man's private judgment is in disagreement with the law of the land he has a right to disobey that law. The right of private judgment will not long continue if such an interpretation be placed upon it, for anarchy, to which such a view would lead, is fatal to freedom of thought. The right of private judgment must recognize the right of the majority to rule and the independent thinker must sub-

mit to majority rule though he utterly disagree with the majority opinion. This does not mean a surrender of his right to think for himself, for that majority rule carries with it the right of the individual to lawfully dissent from the majority and to use all legitimate means to change that majority opinion by public speech and the use of the press. Nor does the right of private judgment mean that each man's opinion is to be regarded as of equal value with that of every other man on a given subject. A man who has never studied medicine has no right to exalt his opinion to equal place with that of a trained physician. But even in the realm of technical knowledge, where indiscriminate private judgment might seem to be excluded, the right of private opinion still obtains, for the untrained individual has the right to decide what technical authority he will accept, and his right of private judgment may be fully exercised in the selection of his own physician.

Now, the right to this free exercise of

private judgment is challenged by our Roman Catholic friends at the point of religion. They grant the right in other realms, but when it comes to deciding for oneself what is religious authority and what authority he should accept; when it comes to deciding what doctrines, religious and ecclesiastical, are true and what are false, the individual is told that he must accept that which bears the Roman Catholic stamp of approval and nothing else. This attitude of Rome is defended on the ground that it tends to promote that freedom of thought for which we have been contending. The Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, one of the Paulist Fathers, in his "Question Box Answers," a work which bears the official approval of the Roman Catholic Church, says that freedom of thought in nonreligious realms is really promoted by submission to authority in the religious realm. He says that in the search for truth it is a relief to know that questions of religion are settled by an infallible authority. The mind is thus set free for unobstructed investigation of

other realms. Let us look at this. There are those who say, "If the Romanist desires to have his religious thinking done for him by another, why object, since he is free to think in other realms as he may choose?" But the answer is that religion is not something which can be separated from a man's total life; it cannot be placed in a water-tight compartment and dealt with as though it had no connection with his common thought and action. Religion is the center of his life and relates itself to every motion of his being. When, therefore, one is taught from the tender years of infancy all through life, that he must not question the authority in religious matters of the Roman Catholic Church, he very easily comes to accept that authority in realms which are not distinctively religious. He listens to the priest and accepts unquestioningly the authorized Roman teaching regarding God, the soul, and the church. But the priest does not strictly confine his utterances to matters of personal religion. Some day a political campaign is on—a mayor, a governor, a

President is to be elected. The Roman Church has political convictions. The priest voices those convictions. The devout Catholic hears that voice, and having been trained not to question the priest in religion, accepts what he may say concerning politics and surrenders his right to independent thought on these matters just as he does on religious matters, and you have practical ecclesiastical dictation in a realm where Rome theoretically grants freedom of thought. Life is so "inextricably mixed" with religion that you cannot surrender the right of private judgment in religion without surrendering it in the whole realm of life.

Herein lies the danger of the parochial school. The Roman Catholic Church is lauded for that practical devotion to religious education which leads it to spend millions of dollars for its own schools while the public school offers free education to its children. Senator George Wharton Pepper,¹ in his excellent Yale lectures, praises the

¹ *A Voice from the Crowd*, Yale University Press publishers.

Roman Catholic Church as the one religious group "which has perceived most clearly the dangers of a secularized education" and declares that he is "wholly without suspicion respecting the motives and aims of our Roman Catholic brethren." We have no desire to disparage sacrificial devotion to religious education wherever practiced, nor do we wish to create unhealthy suspicions, but we submit that we do not need to be suspicious at all; all we need to do is to look at the plain facts which Roman Catholics themselves are ready to declare. They maintain their schools confessedly to teach Roman Catholic doctrines. Their central doctrine concerning the church is that its authority in religion must not be questioned. When young people graduate from these schools that central doctrine has become a part of their mental furnishing. If immediately on graduation they should be transported to Italy, Spain, or some other foreign land, then America would not need to trouble herself about the parochial school. But those young people remain here. They

become our trusted citizens. They are lawyers and judges and business men, and even public-school teachers. Then when Rome makes some deliverance on matters of state or of international relationship, or speaks as did the late Pope concerning the Young Men's Christian Association, or expresses its opinion of Protestantism or the liquor question, vast multitudes of our excellent citizens recall their parochial school training and refuse to think independently on all these questions, not because they are distinctively religious questions, but because the religious authority which they have been taught unquestioningly to obey has made a deliverance and they must unthinkingly submit or be false to their church. This is the American quarrel with the parochial school. We do not cast sinister suspicion on honest motives. We simply take the plain teaching of the Roman Catholic Church concerning religious education, and draw the logical inference.

We thus see that the right of private judgment which Rome grants in nonreli-

gious realms is not a concession at all. When she denies that right in the realm of religion she is practically denying it in all realms. Nor are we left to logical inference at this point. She frankly admits that she does not look with favor on the independent thinking of the individual. Pope Benedict XV, who has just passed to his reward, declared, "No private person, either in books or in daily papers or in public speeches, has a right to act as a teacher in the church. It is well known by all who is the one to whom God confided the magistracy of the church; let then the field be free for him so that he may speak when and how he thinks suitable to speak. It is the duty of all to listen to him with obsequious devotion and to obey his words." There is no opportunity here for the exercise of private judgment. "Obsequious devotion" and utter obedience to the views of another give no place to individual opinion. This is the view taught and defended by Rome. In the "Question Box" before referred to, Father Conway, in his lectures to Protestants, defends this rejec-

tion of the right of private judgment. In answer to the question "Is not your doctrine of infallibility opposed to liberty of thought?" he says, "The doctrine of infallibility is opposed to the false liberty of thinking error, but not to the true liberty of thinking the truth."² This is plausible, but not sound. It is true that no man has a right to hold as truth that which he is intellectually persuaded is not true, but it is also true that every man is under obligation to hold as truth that which he, in the free exercise of his best judgment, has come to regard as truth whether it is actual truth or not. And, conversely, he is under no obligation to personally hold as truth that which he cannot see to be true. The fallacy in Father Conway's answer appears more clearly as he elaborates and illustrates his position. He says, "No intelligent man would consider himself free to deny the fact of wireless telegraphy."³ But the fact is that

² *Question Box*, Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, The Paulist Press, p. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

every man is perfectly free to deny the existence of wireless telegraphy until he has been convinced in his own mind that there is such a thing. It is by this process alone that the world has come to believe in wireless telegraphy. The discoverers and inventors who gave us the wireless never dreamed for a moment of convincing the world that they were right by a declaration that they were infallible. They appealed to our reason, and only as men, by the exercise of private opinion, came to be persuaded that telegraphic messages could be conveyed without wires did that conviction take hold of the race. The wireless projectors did not establish schools to teach their own infallibility, nor seek to raise up a generation that believed it was wrong to question anything they authoritatively said. They believed they had laid hold of scientific truth and they flung it wide to the free thought of the world and asked men to test it for themselves without the least insistence that because the discoverers said it was true it must therefore be so. The answer, then, which

Father Conway gives concerning freedom of thought shows that he does not believe in it. Indeed, he plainly says, in the same answer, "This objection is based on the false notion that unrestricted liberty of thought is a good thing and that every man has a right to think just as he pleases."⁴ It is here that the issue is squarely joined between Protestantism and Romanism. As Protestants we believe that unrestricted liberty of thought is a good thing and that every man has a right to think what he pleases. This does not mean that it makes no difference to Protestantism what a man thinks. The thinking of the world is of tremendous concern to her, otherwise she would not make the presses groan with the tons of literature which she constantly distributes, nor would she send out her preachers by the ten thousand to inform and inspire the minds of her millions of people. She does care what the people think, but she insists that she cannot, and should not if she could, do their thinking for them. She must teach the unthinking to

⁴ *Question Box*, p. 80.

be thoughtful, she must present her facts and arguments to all whom she can persuade to think, but she must leave the final determination in the hands of the individual thinker and wait for his acceptance of her religious views until they commend themselves to his private judgment. Protestantism has no desire for a traditional faith. She knows that the man who is a Protestant, and a Christian for that matter, simply because his father told him to be one is no more in line with progressive Christianity than is the man a worthy American citizen who votes his party ticket simply because his father did. The man who counts in church and state exercises his right of private judgment, and, believing that liberty of thought, unrestricted by arbitrary authority, is a good thing, accepts the religious or political faith that appeals to his rational and moral faculties, and is what he is, politically and religiously, by virtue of his personal decision so to be.

The difference between the Protestant and Roman position at this point is clearly

illustrated by the differing conceptions of what a congregation is. The Protestant preacher looks upon a congregation as a jury and feels himself to be an advocate making a plea. A lawyer pleading with a jury knows that the final determination is with twelve men, each one of whom must be free to exercise his right of private judgment. He comes before the jury not with a statement of authority, either personal or judicial, but with argument and plea, hoping to persuade twelve men to freely agree with him. When he quotes the authority of law, he argues that it applies to the case in hand and trusts the jury will think likewise. So comes the Protestant preacher before his congregation. He is pleading for a verdict. He may quote the authority of Scripture and the words and acts of the fathers, together with the laws of the church, but he knows these avail little unless he can convince those before him, who exercise the right to think as they please, that his positions are well taken. If they are not so persuaded, he recognizes their perfect right

to reject his argument and refuse his plea and arise and go their way unconvinced. No right-thinking preacher would feel that he had won a trophy for his Master if at the close of a sermon a man should come forward and say: "I have listened to your arguments and your plea. They do not appeal to me. I cannot believe your teaching; the doctrines of Christianity do not appeal; but since you claim the authority of high heaven and demand that I accept your religion I will do so, even though my own judgment revolts against it." To such a man the true preacher would say, "I will be glad to present the matter further to you until your own judgment shall assent; but you cannot be a follower of Jesus Christ, who placed such tremendous emphasis on the individual choice, and so thoroughly discounted traditionalism, without reaching the place of free and unrestricted choice of him through the independent action of your own mind and heart."

Now, if the Protestant conception of a congregation is illustrated by the jury, the

Roman Catholic conception is illustrated by a military regiment. The general of an army does not make an appeal to the private judgment of the soldier. He makes an appeal to the recognition of authority. The soldier cannot say, "That does not appeal to my judgment and therefore I will not accept it." He is expected to surrender his judgment to an arbitrary authority and follow a certain course altogether apart from his own opinions. He belongs to the company whom Tennyson immortalizes in his "Charge of the Light Brigade":

"Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."

This is true military submission to authority. The Roman Catholic congregation is not expected to reason why nor make reply when the authorized representative of the church speaks. The priest does not await a verdict; he awaits obedience. It is not reason but command that rules. Not that the devout communicant is expected to be thoughtless, any more than the

obedient soldier is to be unthinking, but each is expected to adjust his thinking to processes preconceived and authoritatively declared.

This position of the Roman Catholic is not one of choice but of necessity. The superstructure of Rome cannot stand if this foundation stone be removed. Just notice how carefully the system is guarded at this point. There is practically no chance whatever for that free spirit of investigation and individual judgment which is the glory of our American life. The death of Pope Benedict XV has called our attention to the papal power. For our Roman Catholic friends in their sorrow over the death of their official head we have the most sincere sympathy and have been glad to remember them in public prayer this evening. Millions of devout men and women throughout the world have suffered bereavement and we have no disposition to add any bitterness to their cup of sorrow. Our reference to the Pope is solely to the method of his election and that of his successor. He is elected by a

college of seventy cardinals. This body has been appointed by a Pope. In it there is not the slightest representation of the Roman Catholic laity. No one who is not an official clergyman of the church can have any voice. The Pope so elected is the supreme watchman on the walls of Romanism. He personalizes the careful system of close scrutiny by which all activities of that church can be seen almost instantaneously. Let a bishop or archbishop reveal the slightest tendency toward progressive ideas; let him advocate the right of Roman Catholic laymen to be heard in the official councils of the church, let him criticize, ever so calmly, the action of his ecclesiastical superiors, and the Pope may remove him without delay. Furthermore, the laws which govern the Roman Catholic Church are expressive only of the clerical mind. The lawmaking body of Romanism has not the slightest lay representation. The rank and file of the membership of the church have no voice whatever in determining what laws shall govern it. The laws of the church in the United States

are made by the national or plenary councils, three of which were held during the nineteenth century. The voting membership of these councils is confined exclusively to the bishops. The parish priesthood, which is the most democratic element in the clerical body, has no voice whatever, to say nothing of the layman. Even this episcopal legislation is subject to the approval of the Pope. When, therefore, you eliminate wholly the voice of the common people, exclude even the common priesthood, cause the lawmaking body to consist exclusively of bishops, make even their legislation subject to the approval of the Pope, require that he be elected by a small body composed of cardinals whom a preceding Pope has appointed, and then make the Pope the absolute ruler of the whole church with no check on his power, it is easy to see that democracy with its attendant right of private judgment has no place whatever in the Roman system.

Now, Rome does not thus exclude democracy simply because of choice, but from

sheer necessity. It is evident that if she should once admit the right of private judgment, her system would fall to the ground. It has been well said that if Rome should cut her little finger she would bleed to death. Once throw open the doctrinal and ecclesiastical system of Rome to common democratic debate, and subject to the common rules of research and reason her dogmatic insistence upon divine right, and that system could not endure. Examine the reasoning by which she supports her claim to be the only official representative of Jesus Christ upon earth. Father Conway is asked, "Is not your church a spiritual despotism in which men must surrender their private judgment in religion to men like themselves?"⁵ He replies in his official "Question Box" that this would be the case if one submitted to the authority of a church founded by Calvin or Wesley, but it is not the case if he surrender his reason to the Roman Catholic Church. When we ask why this distinction, he replies that the Calvinistic or

⁵ *Question Box*, p. 83.

Methodist Church is not authorized by Jesus Christ, but that the Roman Catholic Church is so authorized. When we press him for proof he simply quotes the words of the Master, "He that heareth you, heareth me"; "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you"; "He that despiseth you, despiseth me." The tremendous leap by which he passes from logic to unsupported assumption he does not explain. The most fantastic folly could be proven by similar disregard of the common rules of logic. Now, we submit that if the rational grounds of Rome's assumption of authority were subjected to the decision of the common mind and the same rules of reasoning observed which a lawyer in court or a business man at a directors' meeting must employ, the irrational character of her assumption of authority would appear and her ecclesiastical system would either fall to the ground or undergo radical revision. Rome is therefore fighting for her own life when she opposes the right of private judgment. She cannot in the very nature of the case be friendly to this vital

element of our Protestant heritage. With all personal friendliness toward individual Roman Catholics and all antagonism toward rabid rancor and persecuting prejudice, we must not shut our eyes to the plain fact that the right of every man to think for himself, which is the core of democracy and of Protestantism, is something to which Rome can never reconcile herself so long as she remains what she is to-day.

Behind these opposing attitudes of Romanism and Protestantism lie two opposite theories of the human mind and its workings. The Protestant theory of the mind of man is that it is trustworthy and that if the mental faculties are properly developed and the moral and spiritual nature filled with the spirit of Christ, those intellectual faculties will, in their free exercise, find the truth. Jesus challenged men to this free exercise, when he said "Seek and ye shall find," and when he appealed to men on multiplied occasions to exercise their reasoning powers even with reference to his own divinely authoritative deliverances. Now,

the Roman theory is that the free exercise of the reasoning powers of man will lead first to confusion and ultimately to fundamental error. Just as the Roman distrust of the physical endowments of the race leads her to regard marriage as a concession to weakness and to laud the celibate state as more holy, so the distrust of the intellectual faculties leads her to dictate the thinking of her people as far as she is able. Protestantism believes that both the physical powers and the intellectual faculties are trustworthy, and that when the heart is clean their normal exercise is not only approved but required by God. The Protestant theory stands well the pragmatic test of experience. The free exercise of the mental powers does not lead to that confusion of mind on religious matters with which Protestantism is so often charged. Father Conway tells non-Catholics that they "cannot agree among themselves about the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity."⁶ This statement is a most thoroughgoing misrepresentation

⁶ *Question Box*, p. 81.

of Protestantism. The fact is that all the great Protestant denominations are in essential agreement on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. All believe in the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, salvation through the crucified Redeemer, the resurrection of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, institutional Christianity as represented by the Christian Church, the immortality of the soul, reward and punishment after death. Not only does Protestantism agree on the fundamentals, but on methods of work it is essentially one. The "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America" is a union movement in which all the large denominations of Protestantism unite. United Protestantism promotes evangelism, has adopted a social creed, and is working to promote home and foreign missionary activities of an evangelistic, educational, and philanthropic character. Even in the secondary realm of church polity there is unity, for clergymen and laity pass easily from church to church, with mutual recognition of ministerial orders and lay

membership in harmony with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one." Now, this unity of Protestantism means much more than a similar unity in Roman Catholicism, for it is a spontaneous unity. Protestantism has no Pope, no college of cardinals set on its walls to detect the slightest dissent and immediately correct it. The Protestant churches have been more eager for religious liberty than for religious unity. They have invited the fullest discussion and have encouraged, as some think excessively, the disposition to form new church organizations out of small groups which differ from the main body on matters which seem to them important. Yet with all this free exercise of the right of private judgment Protestantism finds itself to be essentially one on the fundamentals of Christianity and even on multitudes of matters which are not fundamental. Is not this genuine scriptural unity? Do we not claim supernatural supervision of the Old Testament writers because so many different books came from the minds of so many different authors who were

widely separated and who started with no purpose to produce one harmonious volume? The absence of plan to unite reveals the unifying power of truth. Why not, then, credit Protestantism with similar supernatural guidance when, with no purpose to agree, the different denominations have come to such essential agreement? This is surely high testimony to the trustworthiness of the intellectual faculties of man. The search for truth, when undertaken with pure motive and unfettered mentality, is surely approved of God and brings the seeker into harmony with him who is the Spirit of truth. We are not here, even by inference, disparaging the necessity of a divine revelation, for the end of that revelation is to renovate the moral nature of man, emancipate his mind from the bondage which sin of the heart always imposes, and set him free to seek the truth.

This leads us to the practical question which is agitating Romanism and Protestantism alike to-day, Should the historical textbooks in the public school be rewritten? The unwillingness of Rome to trust the in-

tellectual nature of man makes her suspicious of every scientific historian. Her conception of an historian is that he shall be a man who has submitted to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and who writes as an apologist for that church and as a propagandist for Romanism. Protestantism does not want an historian to be either an apologist or a propagandist. She wants him to lay bare the actual facts of history without reference to the help or hurt which those facts may occasion any cause. Protestantism is, therefore, in complete sympathy with the policy which the public school has thus far followed in seeking accuracy of statement and reliability of authorship above all else in the historical textbooks which are placed in the hands of youth. Rome gives abundant evidence that she does not believe in this policy. One of her latest apologists, Edward Ingram Watkin, in his book *Some Thoughts on Catholic Apologetics*, quoted by Professor Henry C. Sheldon, of Boston University, says: "Of the great thinkers who have acknowledged

the authority of the church, the majority have been, and are, men of metaphysical rather than of historical minds, men who prize the static element of experience more than the dynamic. Moreover, among the ancients (with few exceptions) and in the Middle Ages, history was in a very poor condition, since the historical sense, as we understand it, was simply nonexistent. The apologist ought in all honesty to admit this." This has long been the contention of Protestants. They have known many cases where Roman Catholicism has approved historical statements which were made by metaphysical apologists for Rome rather than unbiased scientific historians. Professor David S. Schaff quotes a number of historical inaccuracies which have been proclaimed as truth, due doubtless to the dominance of the metaphysical over the historical cast of mind which Watkin admits in Roman Catholic historians. The present manhood and womanhood of France were taught in their youth that the Huguenots were traitors to their king, Louis XIV, and that in

emigrating from France they despised their native country.

The historical sense was certainly lacking in the historian who prepared those Roman Catholic textbooks. Those Roman Catholic prelates in Washington last fall who pronounced the Irish people "the most apostolic race in history," and Mayor Curley, of Boston, who described the Pilgrim Fathers as a company of "tramps," were likewise sadly lacking in the historical sense of accuracy. Father Conway in his "Question Box" shows a sad disregard of historical accuracy when he states on page 121 that Protestant success in reaching pagan nations "has been ridiculously small, as its own ministers testify," and then quotes from articles written in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Nineteenth Century* in the year 1888 and an article in the "Dublin Review," written in January, 1889. If Father Conway has not read anything concerning the success of Protestant missions since 1888 or 1889, he certainly cannot speak with historical accuracy on the subject. Yet the book in which

this is found is given to non-Catholics in 1921 as a present-day answer to their inquiries!

In view of the manner in which our Roman Catholic friends handle the sacred treasures of historical truth, Protestants are justified in viewing with alarm their proposal to rewrite the historical textbooks for our public schools.

It is not easy to ascertain truth. It is difficult to be historically accurate. The question has been raised "Can we tell the truth?" We need to join all the forces that make for truth and rebuke every tendency to erroneous statement and historical misrepresentation. The Church of Christ should be ever the pillar and ground of truth. Protestantism does not profess to have been faultless in fidelity to truth, but she does claim to have fostered independent thinking on the part of the individual and to have cultivated a disposition to protest against arbitrary dogmatism. Having promoted these forces, she has encouraged a spirit which tends to correct her own mistakes. She has thus ever been a thorn in the

side of every institution claiming immunity from criticism and arrogating to itself dogmatic authority. It is a pity when a great church which claims to be the representative of Christ on earth discourages independent thinking and critical research, for these have not only contributed greatly to the ascertainment of scientific truth, but they are plainly corrective of a thousand shams which have plagued the world. The disposition to falsify is alarmingly prevalent. All genuine progress lies along the path of truth. Truth is the emancipator, says the One who is the truth. The Protestant heritage of truth and the right of the individual to search for it, unhampered by ecclesiastical dogmatism and regardless of consequences, must be maintained if the church and the nation shall press forward to God's goal of triumphant truth; for, as Bryant sings

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again:

The eternal years of God are hers;

But error, wounded, writhes in pain,

And dies among his worshipers.”

II

THE MORAL HERITAGE OF PROTESTANTISM

Text: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men."—Acts 24. 16.

THE moral heritage of Protestantism is closely allied to the intellectual heritage. We saw that the corner stone of the intellectual heritage was the right of private judgment. We find that the moral heritage likewise has a corner stone: it is liberty of conscience. Just as the Protestant insists that a man has the right to think for himself and refuse to accept as intellectually sound that which does not seem reasonable to his own mind, so the Protestant also claims that a man has a right to refuse to believe anything to be right until his own conscience shall approve it. We hold that the determining factor in morals is the vigorous exercise of a man's conscience just as the determining

factor in intellectual life is the free exercise of the individual mind. The right of private judgment and the right to free exercise of one's own conscience go hand in hand.

Liberty of conscience, like the right of private judgment, needs a certain degree of qualifying definition. What is this conscience for whose liberty we stand? Some will answer that it is the voice of God in the soul of man. This answer is too general. If by "the voice of God" is meant that every specific course which the conscience approves is that which is right in the abstract and is in every particular what God would have the individual do, we cannot accept the definition. For conscience approves the conduct which the individual thinks is right and even when the individual is wrong, but honestly thinks he is right, conscience approves. Thus the pagan mother thinks it is right to cast her child into the sacred river as an act of devotion, and her conscience approves an act which in itself is abhorrent to God. It cannot be said that her approving conscience is the voice of God speaking

in favor of child murder. And yet God does most certainly approve of the sacrificial obedience of the individual to his honest convictions. The fact is that conscience is the voice of the moral nature speaking its approval of conduct which is in harmony with that individual's honest convictions. That moral nature is itself the medium through which God speaks to man, so that the motions of the moral nature are produced by God even though their expression by the conscience may not accurately represent the divine mind. Perhaps the best illustration is found in the radio broadcasting which is now occupying the popular mind. When we listen at the receiving end we sometimes hear very imperfectly the voice of a speaker. We cannot understand clearly what he says. Indeed, we may misunderstand him and conclude that he is saying just the opposite of that which is on his lips. The fault is with our receiving set which is the work of an amateur and does not permit the speaker to be heard distinctly. But the fact is that whatever we do

hear through that receiver is caused by the speaker at the other end whose exact meaning is distorted because of the imperfect instruments which we use. So with the conscience. It is imperfect until it has had Christian enlightenment and training, and the voice of God which speaks through the moral nature cannot be distinctly heard nor correctly understood until the medium of communication is perfect, but it is still true that whatever movements are stirring in the moral nature of the individual are occasioned by God who is seeking to express himself clearly to our minds and hearts. In a limited sense it may therefore be said that conscience is the voice of God, but in the unlimited sense of the exact conveyance to the individual of the thought and will of the Divine Being, it is not his voice. It will thus be seen that in emphasizing the right of the individual to the free exercise of his conscience we are not excusing any disregard of such guidance and help as the church and the Bible furnish. While his conscience is to be his guide, he is under obligation to en-

lighten that conscience by every means at his command, and the church is one of the divinely appointed luminaries on the road to righteousness which he cannot afford to ignore.

Again it must be remembered that liberty of conscience means the right to give conscience its fullest exercise. The freedom which it needs is the freedom to act, not to be passive. A man has no right to ask that his conscience be freed from the domination of others simply that he may enslave it himself. The liberty of conscience for which our fathers fought was the liberty to scrutinize every moral demand with the utmost moral diligence to ascertain if its demands were those of God. The indolent conscience, the sleeping conscience can know no true liberty and is entitled to none.

Regarding conscience, then, as the voice of that moral nature through which God seeks to speak, and understanding its freedom to be the opportunity of unrestricted search for moral right, let us pause for a moment and see how great is this moral

heritage and how vital a part it has had in shaping the free institutions of America.

The Pilgrim Fathers gave us our American institutions. It has become popular in some circles to-day to discount the Pilgrims and to tell us how much more highly we have thought of them than we ought to think. It is quite true that our American institutions, in exactly their present-day form, did not come over in the Mayflower, but it cannot be denied that the nearest approach to those institutions in all the world of that day was made by the Pilgrim Fathers when they founded and promoted Plymouth colony. Bancroft says substantially that the document drawn up and signed in the cabin of the Mayflower was the most advanced statement of constitutional democracy then extant. The germ of this constitutional liberty was found in the Pilgrims' insistence on liberty of the individual conscience. The quarrel of these men with the English government was concerning the divine right of kings. The ruling monarchs of that day insisted that the king reigned by divine

right and that to dissent from his dictum was to array oneself against God. The Pilgrims denied this. In so doing they broke with the Anglican Church as well as the state, for episcopacy was the bulwark of royal autocracy, and the two stood or fell together. Because of this protest against ecclesiastical and royal autocracy the Pilgrims were persecuted. Having much in common with the Puritans, the Pilgrim Fathers were much more definite in the claim that no king and no ecclesiastic had a right to supplant the individual conscience. They became the protestants of the Puritans, went to Holland, were more thoroughly indoctrinated in the sanctity of conscience by the teaching of their pastor, the Rev. John Robinson, and, as Silvester Horne put it, took so seriously the teaching of Robinson that government should be founded on the free exercise of the intensified and instructed conscience, that they, one day, rose up and fled to America that they might make the great experiment. Here they formed a government of the people.

The town meeting where all might speak, and not the royal chamber, was the place where laws were made. The church and state were separated in that nonchurch members might vote. Miles Standish, who never joined the church, exercised the franchise. The persecution of the witches with which the Pilgrims have been charged, did not occur in their colony but in that of the Puritans, who were the aristocrats among the colonists. Though the Pilgrims were plain country folk, they believed thoroughly in popular education. Here, then, are American institutions in embryo—separation of church and state, popular education, legislation by the people, aversion to persecution, opposition to ecclesiastical as well as royal autocracy, all these resting on the foundation stone of liberty of conscience. This is our American heritage: this is our Protestant heritage. Those who do not appreciate the one discount the other. It is not surprising that Roman Catholicism prefers "The Star-Spangled Banner" to our national anthem, since the latter sings con-

cerning the "land of the Pilgrims' pride" and evermore reminds us of our inherited opposition to ecclesiastical as well as monarchical rule.

Our Roman Catholic friends are taught that liberty of conscience as we understand it is not a good thing. When viewed from the standpoint of individual exercise it has received the papal denunciation, being characterized as man's madness and not his right. "Liberty of conscience is liberty of perdition" is a quotation from Roman Catholic sources. It is true that in the lectures to Protestants we find quotations which indicate the opposite view. We read that Pope Innocent III declared that "whatever is done contrary to conscience leads to hell,"¹ and that Saint Thomas said, "He who acts against conscience sins."² But even in his appeal to Protestants the Roman apologist reveals a different understanding of obedience to conscience from that which Prot-

¹ *Question Box*, p. 91.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

estantism maintains. The Romanist always has in mind a conscience which has already yielded itself to the authority of the church, and which has been instructed that the Roman Catholic Church is the sole mouth-piece of God on earth. A conscience so instructed can only point to the church, and its warning is always against departure from the teachings of that church, just as the conscience of the heathen woman warns her against departure from heathen practices in which she has been instructed from infancy. It is quite another thing to approve the action of a conscience which has been taught to freely exercise itself regarding every question, even the authority of the church and of the Scriptures. Such free exercise of conscience Rome does not approve, as appears from further study of the same lectures to Protestants by Father Conway to which we have frequently referred. He says that if we were to "allow reason, subject as it is to public opinion, caprice, passion, prejudice, to speak in its own name, the whole basis and sanction of

the moral order would at once disappear.”³ He is here answering a question concerning conscience as a sufficient guide for man. He defines conscience as “reason,” telling us what is good or bad, and he plainly means that if conscience were left to act with perfect liberty, the basis of the moral order would disappear. Here is definite opposition to the free exercise of conscience. It is honest opposition, no doubt, but opposition due to a false moral philosophy which Rome persistently teaches. Her teaching invariably is that there can be no healthy moral development without unquestioning submission to arbitrary religious authority. Her position on this subject is still more clearly set forth when she speaks concerning the right of the Roman Catholic Church to command the temporal power for the teaching and enforcement of her doctrines. Her-genröther declares: “The church rejects the principle of free investigation which makes reason the judge over God’s utterances and

³ *Question Box*, p. 5.

⁴ *Sacerdotalism in the Nineteenth Century*, Henry C. Sheldon, p. 34. Eaton & Mains.

her own teaching office. . . . She rejects in principle the freedom of all worships. Freedom of worship is in itself an evil.”⁴ Devivier, speaking of liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, liberty of education, says: “They are false in principle. The Catholic religion alone is true and binding upon all men, and this religion is identified with the Roman Catholic Church.” He adds: “Neither the church nor the state can be taxed with intolerance and tyranny when they seek, as they did in the Middle Ages to regulate the exercise of the human will, and to diminish for men the facilities for evil and thus prevent them from risking their happiness and welfare.”⁵ This is surely ecclesiastical paternalism which has no place in modern democracy and which abhors liberty of conscience. These official statements of the Roman attitude toward the free exercise of conscience need to be kept in mind when Paulist Fathers tell non-Catholics that Roman Catholicism believes in the exercise of conscience.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35,

Now, the failure to give the conscience of the individual full liberty leads to the substitution of the law of expediency for the law of moral right. Only as we keep the conscience in the ascendancy and grant it freedom to press its persistent question, concerning every proposition, "Is it right?" will we be saved from the entanglements of casuistry which are fatal to wholesome moral attitudes. If service to an institution, however worthy, shall come to be regarded as of greater value than obedience to the clear demands of conscience, then the rule of expediency masters us. This is the point at which Romanism endangers our moral heritage. The promotion of the interests of the church is more precious to her than strict obedience to the voice of conscience. Thus while she probably would not directly ask an individual to do wrong in defense of the church, yet many are without doubt led to this course in practical life because of her teaching. Take a few illustrations.

Among the advertisements which appeared in Pittsburgh newspapers recently

was one which defended the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope and sought to make the practice of ascribing inerrancy to an individual or an institution appear perfectly normal in the common practices of life. An analogy between the papacy and the Supreme Court of the United States was drawn. It was stated that the Supreme Court is infallible. This, of course, is entirely contrary to the fact. The Supreme Court is final, but not infallible, and there is a vast difference between finality and infallibility. That great court is the last resort in law, but it has never claimed to be infallible. Indeed, it practically asserts its own fallibility in many of its decisions, for often one third of its own members criticize the opinion of the two thirds, which opinion is the final decision. Lawyers outside the court by no means regard it as inerrant and freely agree with its minority opinion, but all, whether in agreement or otherwise, accept its majority decision as the last word on that particular case. The finality of the Pope is not a serious matter; it is his claim to infallibility

that causes moral damage. This claim the Roman Catholic Church makes for itself, teaching American children in its parochial school catechism that "to believe the Catholic Church is to believe God himself." No analogy to this arrogant assumption appears anywhere in human institutions of government which are not despotic. It is utterly unfair, then, to ascribe to our great federal court of last appeal an attitude of legal arrogance which would lead it to pronounce even its unanimous decisions as utterly inerrant and destitute of any possibility of legal flaw. Now, we contend that to advertise to the world that the claim of Romanism to infallibility is precisely paralleled by our Supreme Court when there is not a vestige of analogy, and to confuse the popular mind by a subtle disregard of the fundamental distinction between finality and infallibility, is to be governed by expediency and not by the rule of conscientious right.

Take another instance. In the same series of advertisements the Roman Catholics

make official claim that one of the sons of their church, Camillus by name, was the founder of the Red Cross. The popular mind would immediately conclude that this was the great international organization which we have always understood was founded by Jean Henri Dunant, of Geneva, Switzerland, who, moved by the unnecessary suffering which he witnessed at the battle of Solferino in 1859, started an agitation which led to the so-called Geneva Convention, out of which the Red Cross societies grew. This is the Red Cross which Clara Barton founded in its American form and for which the American people gave so generously and so cheerfully during the World War. Now, we are told that the real originator was an obscure Roman Catholic, unknown to the general encyclopedias, living in the latter part of the sixteenth century, who established an organization for the care of the sick and the poor. Professor Schaff, who calls attention to this matter and who has investigated it thoroughly, says that he does not find even in the great German Ro-

man Catholic Encyclopedia any intimation that Camillus was connected with any kind of Red Cross organization, or that he ever made any provision for the care of the wounded on battle fields. Here, then, is an attempt to make a man who did nothing more than organize a local sick-benefit order and administer local charitable relief funds the originator of the present international and world-famous Red Cross society. The law of expediency is in operation again rather than the law of conscientious right. It is altogether expedient that the Roman Church shall have the credit due the founder of the Red Cross, but it is altogether wrong that the popular mind should be confused and filled with error by statements which are not historically sound.

Take, if you will, the condemnation of the Young Men's Christian Association by the late Pope Benedict XV, in which he declared that it was corrupting the morals of young men. The popular impression from such an official deliverance was that the Association was really damaging the moral

life of manhood. This, of course, was not the thought of the Pope, for he could not have been so woefully misinformed as to make such an egregious blunder. What he doubtless meant was that the Young Men's Christian Association was teaching young men to think independently, to study questions from the standpoint of conscientious determination of what was right, and therefore leading them to discount the claims of the Roman Church to speak as the voice of God in morals and religion. In that sense the Association was and is assuredly changing the mental attitude of youth in such a way as to "corrupt" pure Romanism. If the Pope had said just that, his word would have little effect in prejudicing the popular mind of uninformed Romanism against the "Y." That would have been the course of truth, but it would not have been expedient for Roman Catholicism.

Now, we maintain that the failure of Romanism to put the emphasis on the free exercise of the conscience through its failure to teach that the insistent question of the

moral nature, "Is it right?" must be heard above all inquiries concerning what is expedient has led to a lowering of moral standards wherever Romanism has held sway. There are certain lines of conduct which Romanism has approved in the past and which it approves to-day to which Protestantism is most decidedly opposed. Take the matter of persecution. Rome has persistently taught that in the interest of its church those who oppose it should be dealt with severely. Hence she has a long record of persecution. Now, we are well aware of the fact that Rome through some of her modern appeals to non-Catholics denies any torture or death to have been inflicted by the authority of the church, and we are also aware that Protestantism in the past has at times been guilty of persecution, out of which fact Romanists make the largest capital. But let us examine these points. Let us see whether Rome has ever officially authorized persecution.

Cardinal Gibbons in his "Faith of our

Fathers," an authorized Roman Catholic publication, says that in all of his reading he has not found that the Roman Catholic Church has officially authorized suffering or death in the case of conscientious objectors to the Roman Creed. Surely, the Cardinal was familiar with the words of Pope Leo X, who in his bull condemning Luther in 1520 declared that the burning of heretics was according to the will of the Holy Spirit. He must have known that Pope Innocent III in 1215 officially instituted the Inquisition, that Pope Sextus IV sanctioned the Spanish Inquisition, that Pope Paul IV was at the head of the Roman Inquisition. Victor Duruy, the French historian, in his chapter on "The Catholic Restoration," credits four great Popes—Paul III, Paul IV, Pius V, and Sixtus V—with saving Italy to Roman Catholicism after it had lost one half of its empire through the Reformation. He says: "As individuals were executed, likewise books were burned. These means obstinately pursued were successful. Roman Catholicism was saved in the peninsula, but at what

a price!"⁶ But when Cardinal Gibbons comes to the Spanish Inquisition he protects the church by holding Spanish royalty, and not the Roman Church, responsible for that refinement of cruelty. He seems, however, to forget that church and state were most perfectly united in those days and whatever the state did, especially for the promotion of religion, is that for which the church must bear its full share of responsibility. If Rome did not approve the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition, she should at least have openly and positively denounced them, but do we find any Pope condemning the Spanish king for those cruelties as Ambrose condemned the cruelties of Theodosius in the fourth century? If the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century was the same true church of Christ that existed in the fourth century, why did not the reigning Pope rise and openly condemn the royal inquisitor and say, as did Ambrose, "If you imitate David

⁶ *Puruy's General History of the World*, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., publishers. Review of Reviews. Vol. ii, p. 328.

in crime, imitate him in repentance"? When it comes to the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day Cardinal Gibbons has another way of excusing the Roman Catholic Church. He says that the reason the Pope caused a *Te Deum* to be sung when he heard of the slaughter of the Protestants on that awful night in Paris was because he thought it was simply the overthrow of traitors who had been plotting the life of the rightful ruler, and the Pope ordered a song of praise in recognition of the triumph of loyalty over treason! But the Cardinal did not explain how it happened that in addition to the song of praise which the Pope ordered he also required that a medal be struck off having on one side the image of the Pope and on the other a representation of the destroying angel, with the words, "Massacre of the Huguenots." We have no desire to hold humane and kind-hearted Roman Catholics responsible to-day for what their ecclesiastical ancestors did in darker ages gone, but we do hold them responsible for failing to acknowledge the colossal crime

which the church committed and for attempting to so explain away the plain facts of history as to make it appear that Rome was perfectly guiltless of persecuting her opponents even unto death. We are forced to the conclusion that the reason why her apologists do not make complete acknowledgment of her grievous fault and confess that the church sinned and sinned most shamefully, is that she still holds that if it should appear that the church again needed such measures to defend herself, she would be justified, even in this enlightened age, in resorting to similar practice. When we hear one of her apologists saying three centuries after the Inquisition that "Neither church nor state, which are bound together upon the basis of divine law, recognizes tolerance," and when Joseph Hergenröther, trusted member of the Vatican and authorized Roman Catholic historian, says, "The authorization of every form of worship is a grave injustice in purely Catholic countries like Spain and South America," then we have reason to fear that Rome has not yet

repudiated her former faith in the efficiency and moral rectitude of persecution. If authorization of differing forms of worship is a "grave injustice" in Roman Catholic countries, then why may she not use the strong hand of the law to exclude non-Catholics who worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience? Indeed, we are not left to inference here. Another defender, Granderath, says: "The principle that she possesses the power of outward punishment the church naturally cannot surrender. Meanwhile, though she holds fast her principle, in applying it she takes account of the conditions of the time."⁷ If this be correct, perhaps those who insist that the Roman Catholic Church is utterly un-American, since she does not grant the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, are not as rabid on the subject as we have often supposed.

But what about Protestant persecutions?

⁷ *Sacerdotalism in the Nineteenth Century*, Henry C. Sheldon, p. 36. Eaton & Mains.

As stated above, we make no attempt to deny the historical facts nor apologize in any way for them. We insist that wherever and whenever Protestantism undertook to promote its doctrines or advance its enterprises by means of persecution, it sinned with a high hand against humanity and God. This, however, we have to say for Protestantism, that whenever she has practiced persecution she has stultified herself. She has had no theory which has been fundamental to her claims as a genuine Christian Church which has supported any of her persecuting practices. Luther insisted on the right of private judgment and direct access to God. He also insisted that "it is contrary to the will of the Spirit that heretics should be burned." If, therefore, he favored the persecution of the Jews, as is claimed, he was inconsistent with himself and acted in flat contradiction of the Protestantism for which he stood. The Puritans of New England, not the Pilgrim Fathers, persecuted the witches and Roger Williams because they still held to the anti-Protestant theory of

the right of the church to use the temporal power to enforce its doctrinal beliefs. The Puritans were not purged of the poison of high-church Anglicanism when they came to America. Anglicanism had never utterly broken with the Romish theory. Its quarrel has not been with the Roman theory so much as with the Roman application of that theory. Such a theory led the Protestant Puritans to act inconsistently with their own Protestant principles. As Protestantism purges herself of every vestige of the Roman theory and comes to regard the church simply a means to an end, holding that the end is the absorption of the spirit and ethical power of Jesus in individuals and in society, in that proportion does persecution come to be abhorrent to the Protestant mind and practically impossible of practice. Thus is it that true Protestantism has rebuked the partial Protestantism of John Calvin. He it is who has been called "The Protestant Pope" and whose severity of administration in Geneva led to the saying, "Many more tears have been shed under Calvin than

were ever shed over him." Calvin sanctioned the execution of one Michael Servetus, who, by the way, was a patron of a Roman Catholic archbishop for twenty years, and whom Roman Catholicism was ready to convict on the very evidence which John Calvin furnished against him. Servetus, however, escaped from his jailer and avoided Roman Catholic execution for his heresy by a very narrow margin. Then he came to Geneva. Calvin accomplished what Rome tried to do and could not. We have no apology whatever to make for Calvin any more than we would have had for Rome if she had succeeded. We are glad that modern Protestantism has inscribed over the grave of Calvin its own protest against his deficient Protestantism in the following words: "Huguenots in Geneva, true sons of the Reformation, recognizing the benefits of Calvin's life and teachings, hereby repudiate his crime, which was the crime of his age." Thus Protestantism reveals a different attitude toward persecution. We submit that the moral standards of Protestantism grow-

ing out of a recognition of the right of every man to the free exercise of his conscience are higher than those which Romanism can ever have while she distrusts the moral, as she does the intellectual nature of man and insists that he cannot be trusted with free moral exercise but must be guided by authoritative compulsion.

In conclusion, we look at the general moral conduct which Romanism begets in her people. It is no slander to say that countries in which Romanism is supreme have low standards of living. South America, Mexico, Spain, Austria, and France have different standards of moral life from England and America. It cannot be the climate, nor the form of government, nor lack of opportunity. Rome has had abundant chance in these lands, and if submission of the conscience to authority rather than its free exercise produces a higher type of moral life, human conduct in these countries should be at its best. On the contrary, Roman Catholic countries are sadly illiterate and immoral. In some parts of South

America illegitimacy of birth runs as high as fifty-seven per cent. This is not due to any inherent immorality in the people but to the mercenary spirit of Romanism, which demands high fees for the marriage ceremony and tolerates moral laxity rather than ecclesiastical irregularity. In Spain when Rome completely controlled the educational system sixty-eight per cent of the population was illiterate and in Italy the illiteracy ran as high as ninety-three per cent. When the Italian government took control illiteracy was reduced one half. Rome had her opportunity with France. At last the educational system was taken from her. She violently protested, but her loss of control benefited France in the reduction of illiteracy from fourteen to five per cent.

In Mexico Romanism has been in power for centuries. Only in recent years has Protestant influence been felt in the slightest degree. When she had perfect control ninety per cent of the population could not read nor write, and even to-day Mexico is at least sixty per cent illiterate. Indeed, the

educational budgets for all Latin America, with its eighty-five million people, are not much larger, we are told, than for the one city of New York, which has less than six millions. Illiteracy and immorality go hand in hand. No one expects to find the moral standards of Christian civilization in South America. There libertines and renegades from justice expect to find their paradise. Why should this be so? Roman Catholicism has been in South America longer and has had much greater control than has Protestantism in North America. If she is the only authorized Church of Christ on earth and her moral teaching is according to the mind of God, why, then, has her type of Christianity been such a colossal moral failure? The low moral standards of the people relate themselves directly to the Roman Church. A Protestant bishop, observing unusual debauchery on a church feast day, inquired as to the particular religious festival which was being observed, and received the reply, "This is the feast of the Holy Ghost"! This type of religion lowers

moral ideals. A college dean in Brazil wrote, "It is with great sadness that I witness the steady decrease in the number of unselfish, idealistic, genuine men."⁸

When we come to our own country we find that, in spite of the fact that there are numbers of Roman Catholic people who are individually high-minded and morally strong, Romanism as such does not bring to us moral uplift. We desire to give Roman Catholicism credit for every good she does, and we deplore that narrow bigotry which can see nothing in her worthy in the least of praise, but with all charity we must admit the sad fact that the moral forces which are struggling to make Jesus King in all realms of life do not receive any decided impetus, to say the least, when Romanism moves into a community. How much of Sabbath observance is promoted by Roman Catholics? How much strength is given by Romanism to the cause of political righteousness when decent citizens fight corrupt political organizations and try to elect men,

⁸ Eric M. North, *The Kingdom and the Nations*, p. 166.

themselves Roman Catholics, who stand for high ideals and insist that Roman philanthropic institutions shall be subject to the same official scrutiny as that which other denominations cheerfully accept? How much support does clean government receive from Romanism in such a crisis? How were movements for moral uplift of young people promoted when Sunday night entertainments were provided for them in beer gardens, where liquor freely flowed, before prohibition came? How much help did the cause of prohibition receive from the Roman Catholic Church as such? There were groups of Roman Catholics who helped greatly, and noble leaders appeared from time to time, but the church officially and as a whole hindered rather than helped. A Roman Catholic priest, the late Father Thomas McLoughlin, of New Rochelle, New York, stated publicly in our hearing that when Archbishop Ireland asked the Pope for his blessing on the Archbishop's Total Abstinence Society, the Holy Father said to him, "Do you mean that any one who joins

your society must give up even the drinking of wine?" "Yes," said Ireland, "that is what it means." "Then," said the Pope, "I should think a person, for such self-denial, should have some kind of a blessing." Here was the papacy's answer to total abstinence. It should be an occasion of humiliation to Rome to realize that in the greatest moral reform of the century the Roman Catholic Church as such has had no part, and that Protestantism is the only ecclesiastical body that deserves any credit in effecting the legal banishment of this age-long curse.

We conclude where we began. The moral conduct of a people reflects its moral education. Rome teaches that the conscience must not be trained to independent action. She seeks to bear the moral burdens of her people and thus retards their moral growth. Our moral heritage lifts the conscience to high place and calls upon the individual to bear his own moral burden. The church can aid him by teaching a sound moral philosophy and by showing the moral disintegration which compliance with the law of expediency

brings. To preserve that moral heritage we must guard against that Jesuitical casuistry which justifies the means if the end be worthy. Such faulty moral conceptions may be ours in spite of our hatred of Jesuitism. Dr. Frederick H. Wright, pastor of the American Church in Rome and connected with a Protestant publishing house, was offered a manuscript for publication by an Italian of high character and positive Protestant convictions. He was a man of decided ability and the manuscript contained beautiful stories for children which had high literary worth. On reading it, however, it was discovered that it was shot through with Jesuitical teaching. It represented a little boy protecting his sister in a brotherly way, but always with some falsehood which resulted in benefit to the girl. The Protestant publishers told the author they could not print it while it contained that Jesuitical moral distortion. The author was indignant and insisted that he hated Jesuitism and its teachings as much as the publishers. He was led at last to see that he

was still unconsciously holding to the false philosophy of Jesuitism with which he had been indoctrinated in youth while he had broken utterly with the system. He eliminated the objectionable elements; the book published was among the best in the literature of moral education, and was introduced into the government schools by the minister of education.

Thus we see how easily we may hold the false moral philosophy of Rome while we repudiate Romanism. There must be careful guarding at this point, for our moral heritage will not be maintained by mere denunciation of the Roman Catholic Church but by a humble and persistent effort, supported by divine help, to avoid repetition of the moral blunders by which Rome endangers the moral heritage of Protestantism and of free America.

III

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF PROTESTANTISM

Text: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—1 Timothy 2. 5.

As the right of private judgment underlies the intellectual heritage of Protestantism and liberty of conscience the moral heritage, so the right of direct access to God is the foundation stone of our spiritual heritage. If we believe that man can approach God directly and that no human intermediary is necessary for the fullest intimacy of the soul with God; if we take the words of the text to mean what they say and permit no interpretation which would justify a human priest coming between the soul and the divine Christ, then we have no need of the elaborate system of spiritual ministration which the Roman Catholic Church provides. The confessional, penance, extreme unction, purgatory, as well as the Roman attitude

toward the use of the Scriptures, all rest upon the theory that man needs a human intermediary, that he cannot know God satisfactorily if he approach him directly, and that the divinely appointed way is by means of a human priest who is clothed with divine authority to pronounce forgiveness of sins and to decide whether or not the soul has reached a state of acceptability with God.

Protestantism rejects this view. She holds that a man can and should come into direct and immediate relation with God—that Jesus Christ is the one Mediator, and that he is qualified to be such because he is God incarnate. Protestantism refuses to believe with those who originally promoted the worship of the Virgin Mary, that the deity of Jesus is so exalted that he cannot enter with complete sympathy into perfect fellowship with weak and sinful men as could someone who is entirely human and yet occupies a unique relation to the Incarnate Christ as did his earthly mother.

This is one of the fundamental principles

of Protestantism, and, like those which we have previously considered, requires a certain degree of explanation. Because Protestants reject a human intermediary, we do not on that account disregard all human agencies in bringing about a direct and personal relation of the soul with Christ. There are several things in this connection which seem to be similar, but which are essentially distinct. There is a decided difference between introduction and intervention. When you introduce one person to another you bring together those who have been strangers. You do not, however, stand between them after they are introduced, but retire and leave them to relate themselves directly to each other. The Protestant Church believes in the human agency of introduction, and its ministers and laymen are busy bringing people to Jesus as Andrew brought Peter. They introduce their friends to Christ, as without this process of human introduction multitudes would never know him. But when the introduction has been effected, it is the duty of the one so intro-

ducing to retire and let the individual introduced deal directly with his God. The Roman priest not only introduces, but intervenes. He stands between the soul and Christ. It is true that he teaches the communicant to pray more or less directly to God, but in the great transactions of repentance and forgiveness he insists that he must remain as the intermediary, dictating the penance and informing the penitent when he is actually forgiven of God. Not only so, but the Romanist confounds interpretation with intervention. Protestants believe that the human minister and layman should interpret God to men, hence all the agencies of preaching and teaching which Protestantism provides, but interpretation is a very different thing from intervention. The interpreter at best is only a temporary expedient and anticipates direct communication. Recently there came to Pittsburgh a distinguished Japanese. He was the guest at dinner on one occasion of a group of citizens and Sunday-school workers. After-dinner addresses were made in his honor

which he could understand only through an interpreter, for he could not speak a word of English. At length he responded to the felicitations of the speakers and spoke for half an hour in Japanese. We could not understand a word he said. Then his interpreter arose and for another half hour told us what the guest had been saying. That interpreter came between us and the distinguished visitor and in a sense was for us an intermediary. But that mediation was only temporary. All present realized that it was most unsatisfactory and could never remain as a permanent means of communication. If we were to have long continued and satisfactory fellowship with that man, he must either learn to speak English or we must learn to speak Japanese. So with the interpretation of God to the soul of man by the agency of the church. In so far as she may interpret God to man and in that way stand between God and the soul, Protestantism insists that the process is wholly temporary and is intended to operate only until the individual learns the medium of com-

munication with the Divine; then the interpreter, in so far as he has been an intermediary, must retire, else his presence will be an impertinence. We repeat that every agency of Protestantism which may be cited as a parallel to the confessional—personal interviews with converts, the private instruction given by class leaders, Sunday-school teachers and pastors—must be interpreted in the light of the fundamental principle of Protestantism, namely, that the human agency operates alone for purposes of introduction and interpretation, but never in the sense of permanent intervention. When the man has once found Christ, all intermediaries must depart. The agencies of the church are useful to him without doubt, knowledge of God and his way he must seek, and the church is ordained to help him there, but all must be regarded as merely contributory to that intimate, personal fellowship of man with his Maker, of the soul with his Saviour which receives such rapturous emphasis in the Bible and in the literature of the saints. It would have

been an insult to have proposed human intervention between David and his Divine Shepherd in that experience of which he sings when the Lord is his Shepherd and he knows he cannot want. The earthly life of our Lord reveals an intimacy of personal fellowship with his disciples which suffered no breakage when those men came to know him as their Lord and their God. Paul deals directly with Jesus and is evermore seeking to lead the people of his time into a fellowship just as intimate and just as directly personal as was his. The saints of primitive Christianity would have scorned the suggestion of a priestly intermediary. Listen to Clement of Alexandria, a Christian Father of the second century whom Jerome pronounced the most learned of men. He presents in his great hymn "Shepherd of Tender Youth" the thought of direct access to God which the early church counted so precious. He sings:

"Thou art the great High Priest;
Thou hast prepared the feast
Of heavenly love;

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While in our mortal pain
None calls on thee in vain,
Help thou dost not disdain,
Help from above."

Even when we come down to the Dark Ages we find the saints who shine as stars in the midnight gloom, show that light comes through direct touch with God. In his great hymn, "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts" Bernard of Clairvaux speaks the language of direct approach of the soul to God:

"Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on thee call;
To them that seek thee, thou art good,
To them that find thee, all in all."

Protestantism insists on this right of direct access to God which has yielded such precious fruit of spiritual experience and conduct and at this point comes into collision with Roman Catholicism. In making this contention we are dealing with a vital principle and not simply with a particular form of religious devotion which might be a matter of personal taste or educational preference. Much is being said to-day con-

cerning the evil of religious intolerance and with the condemnation of it we are in heartiest accord. A local newspaper quoted recently on its front page the words of one Napoleon Hill, who says, "If we must give expression to intolerance, we should not speak it, but write it—write it on the sands near the water's edge." He says that intolerance is the greatest sin, and he hopes that when he gets to heaven he will find no Jews nor Gentiles, no Catholics nor Protestants, but only human souls and brothers. Mr. Hill and his friends might charge us with intolerance in speaking as we do on these disputed themes, but our contention is that in so speaking we are working by another method toward the same goal of broad charity which he seeks. To get rid of intolerance we must eradicate the roots as well as trim the branches. In insisting on the right of direct approach to God we maintain that we are seeking to destroy a tap-root of intolerance. Intolerance is promoted not only by those who practice it but by those who suffer it. Intolerance, like other

crimes of despotism, has gone when its victims have refused to suffer it. Let us ask why have men endured it? The answer is, because of certain advantages which they felt the promoters of intolerance could alone provide, and so great were those advantages that men were willing to pay the price which the intolerant exacted. This is true to-day in industrial realms. There are workingmen who have endured the intolerance of certain capitalists because only by such endurance could they keep their positions and have steady work. They felt the possession of steady employment was worth the price of submission to intolerance. The same is true if we reverse the situation. Labor organizations when in control of a situation have often been intolerant to employers, and many a manufacturer or builder has smarted beneath the requirement of labor leaders, yet has endured the smart rather than suffer a strike which would have crippled his business. The point is that many advantages accrue to men at the hand of the intolerant, and for the sake

of those advantages people submit to radical wrongs. One way to correct this intolerable situation is to remove those advantages from the hand of the intolerant. Once let men see that they have no advantage to gain in submitting to the lash of despotism, and they will rise and refuse to suffer further.

Now, Rome has always had it in her power to promote and maintain intolerance. She has always taught her people that it is of immense spiritual advantage to obey her commands. She has thoroughly imbued the minds of her communicants with the idea that the power of spiritual life and death was in her hand. She has insisted that she had power to reach into the invisible and lay hold on God and that she could reach into the invisible of a man's soul and control his spiritual relations with God. This is the meaning of the confessional. The priest hears the confession and determines what type of penance will bring the soul a state of acceptability with God. When the penance has been performed acceptably to the priest, then he professes to

be able to reach into the invisible and ascertain how God feels toward the soul of that penitent, and his priestly absolution or refusal to absolve is the direct message from God whom he alone has been able to reach. Extreme unction rests on the same assumption of spiritual advantage to the individual. The priest hurries to the death-bed of a communicant, not to pray with him and give him spiritual comfort only, but to do something for him in relation to God and to the unseen world which he claims cannot possibly be done for him outside the Roman Catholic Church. So when a man dies, the same hold on the unseen in its relation to the departed soul is asserted by Rome. She still has her hand on the spiritual life of the individual, and until friends of the departed provide certain masses those friends are told that the departed cannot come to a satisfactory spiritual state even though his spirit has passed from earth. Now, here is a series of tremendous advantages which Rome professes to give to her obedient children. Once let them believe that she holds these spir-

itual advantages in her hand, and men will endure extreme intolerance rather than imperil them. The religious life is, after all, most precious to men, and they do so highly esteem spiritual good, in spite of all seeming indifference and even hostility to it, that they have revealed a readiness to pay almost any price for what they believed to be genuine religious advantage. Here is Rome's strangle hold on her people. They have been taught in the most impressionable years of life that she, and she only, has in her hand the power of spiritual life and death. Believing that she can save their souls or condemn them to everlasting death, men who exercise independence regarding every other question, will bow their souls at this shrine of spiritual autocracy, and Roman Catholics, on whom their church has but a slender hold during health and life, will, on the approach of death, return to what they conceive to be the ark of spiritual safety. Often a pastor has been surprised to find Roman Catholics who attended his church services, evidently preferring them to their

own, go back to Romanism when death drew near and seek the ministrations of a priest, lest their soul should suffer as it crossed the dark valley.

We submit, then, that if Rome had always shown the spirit of kindness and had been most tender-hearted in her dealing with friend and foe; if she had utterly eschewed persecution and repudiated all disposition to use the temporal power for the promotion of her religious enterprises, even then she would be a despotism, though a very benevolent one, and thus out of sympathy with our American institutions. But when we know that Rome has by her official deliverances and her authorized acts displayed the spirit of an intolerant despot, justifying herself on the ground that she must show no leniency toward those whom she conceives to be wrong, then we see that intolerance with her is not an accident nor the practice of a few unauthorized agents who have falsely spoken in her name, but belongs to the very essence of her teaching concerning the relation of the soul to God.

Now, we have reached the very core of Protestantism. The ground of Luther's protest was spiritual. He had personally come into direct relation to God through justifying faith. He found he had no need of the elaborate system of intervention between God and the soul which was practiced by Rome. In the light of this new experience he went forth and protested against many abuses in conduct which were practiced in the name of the church and in which protest he expected to be supported by the Pope himself. It was an occasion of great grief when he found that he had to resist the Pope. He had been an ardent advocate of the papacy. He says, "I was then a monk and a mad papist, ready to murder any person who denied obedience to the Pope." His position of protest was taken only after deep heart-searching and at great cost to himself. He says, "O with what anxiety and labor, with what searching of the Scriptures have I justified myself in conscience in standing up alone against the Pope!" It was a great blow to him to discover that the

moral irregularities against which he protested were countenanced by the Pope, but still greater to find that the papal teaching concerning the soul's relation to God was contrary to the Scriptures, to the experience of the saints, and to the teaching of the primitive church.

Now, this assumption of spiritual control, like her position on the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, is one which Rome must hold if she shall maintain her system. Let her cease for a generation, even a decade, to teach that she has control of the souls of men; let her tolerate independent and free approach of the soul to God and the consequent lack of necessity for penance and extreme unction; let her teach, as does Protestantism, that the spiritual ministrations of the church are only for the edification and comfort of the souls of men, but do not represent an actual power to determine the spiritual status of the individual, and the Roman system as it now stands will disintegrate.

Since, then, this doctrine of spiritual con-

trol through authorized intervention is so vital to Romanism, let us see on what grounds it rests. There are three realms in which Rome professes to find justification.

The first of these is the realm of Scripture. She quotes certain passages from the New Testament and interprets them as giving her this spiritual authority. The first and chief of these are the passages in Matthew and in John concerning "binding" and "loosing" and the remission of sins. Jesus said to his disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Again, on the first Easter Sunday evening, when Jesus met with his disciples, he said, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Now, the Roman Catholic interpretation of these words is that Jesus was here committing to the Roman Church as it now stands the exclusive right to pronounce forgiveness of sins. The claim, of course, is that Jesus was giving to the

apostles as the official head of the church this right which was to be passed on to their successors, and as Rome claims exclusive rights in apostolic succession, she maintains that she forgives sin to-day by authority divinely conferred on her at that time. Of course, there is here that same logical leap for which Rome is famous by which she ignores all rules of evidence and substitutes unwarranted assumption for proof. There is not the remotest evidence that Jesus had a church organization of any kind in mind when he thus spoke, and it is a wild flight of the imagination to suppose that he was prophetically looking at the Roman Catholic Church as it is to-day and was singling it out from all the other churches of Christendom, with their vast numbers and record of at least equal Christliness, and saying that this particular denomination of Christians, and this alone, should have the right to forgive sins. If Rome interpreted these words to mean that all Christian churches were meant by Jesus, we would not accept such a view, but when she says that the

the souls of men. If that were what he meant, the apostles certainly did not so understand him, for they were continually referring penitent persons directly to him for the settlement of the soul's problems. Peter on the Day of Pentecost tells the inquirers to repent and be converted in order that their sins may be blotted out. He does not assume to blot them out. Paul tells the Philippian jailer to believe on Jesus and he will be saved. He does not pretend to personally retain or remit sins. He is not intervening between the jailer and Christ, but simply pointing out the way of salvation, as any layman might do. John says that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The plain meaning is that anyone may confess directly to Christ and find forgiveness. No one would ever have thought of reading into it the implication of an intervening priest except for the purpose of maintaining a theory. Indeed, the whole spirit of the New Testament is a protest against the thought of a human intermediary. The system of priestly

intervention in Old Testament times is supplanted "by the new and living way." Christ is now the great High Priest. Men may come boldly to the throne of grace. The Epistle to the Hebrews proclaims in nearly every line the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. For a human priest to stand between the believer and Christ is to copy the Old Testament and to revive the system which has been completely "done away." "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Hence follows the comforting exhortation which is made possible only by an utter elimination from the gospel plan of the ministrations of an intervening human priest. Listen to its emphasis of the personal right of the individual to come directly to God: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of

Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." It would be difficult to conceive of words more plainly declaring the complete rejection of the priestly system of human intervention in the soul's discovery of and fellowship with its divine Lord. If those men who heard Jesus say, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted" had understood him to mean that they were to establish a system of priestly intervention such as Romanism maintains to-day, then the New Testament as we have it would never have been written and a church founded by apostles so believing would have denied the Epistle to the Hebrews a place in the canon.

Moreover, any interpretation of the Master's words which makes them to mean that only eleven men and their successors should have the right to pronounce divine forgiveness, is in direct opposition to the spirit the Master continually displayed. He

was evermore condemning a rigid literalness and a mechanical formalism. He positively refused to be shut up in spiritual matters to any ecclesiastical system. The form was nothing with him; the substance was everything. He was constantly finding men and women outside ecclesiastical regularity who were better than those who were within. He insisted that strict observance of prescribed ceremonialism could not save a man. He said he would not be able to recognize many who had prophesied in his name and in his name cast out devils, because their spirit was not right. How, then, can we think of such a Teacher passing over for all time to a little group of men an authority in the forgiveness of sins which he himself would no longer exercise, so that no one could be forgiven, however worthy, unless he had the seal of this little group or its authorized successors? If the Roman interpretation is true, we are shut up to the conviction that Jesus actually divested himself of the forgiving prerogative and bestowed it on those few apostles and their successors. If Rome

once granted that Jesus might forgive sins without using the apostles and the Roman Church, then her whole system would fall, for she would have to admit that in Protestantism Jesus might forgive men directly even though in Romanism he forgives them only through priestly intervention. This would remove all the exclusiveness which belongs to the Roman system and would cause it to disintegrate. We maintain, then, that there is not the least warrant in the New Testament for the supposition that Jesus, when he spoke to the apostles about remitting and retaining sins, intended to give even them the exclusive right of forgiveness much less that he intended to confine that right to the Roman Church or to any other particular church for its exclusive exercise.

But the theological aspect of this assumption is equally opposed to the Roman theory. The accepted theological view of God represents him as a Spirit dealing with the spirits of men. God is regarded as omniscient. He searches the reins and the

hearts of men. Here, then, comes a penitent; he feels the burden of sin and seeks forgiveness. When he comes to the priest his sincerity has to be put to the test. The priest professes no supernatural penetration into the soul of the suppliant. The penance imposed is the test. If the penitent performs the penance required, the priest concludes that he is sincere and then pronounces him forgiven. Here two elements enter which do not accord with Christian theology. There is the element of time. Why should God, who knows the human heart and who is a Father, delay his pardon of a repentant soul until a priest has had time to put that penitent to a test? The test is required only because the priest is human and thus devoid of omniscience which the great High Priest possesses. Why should God be supposed to restrain his fatherly eagerness to forgive his repentant son simply to accommodate the slowly moving priest? But there is also the element of fallibility. The priest does not know whether the communicant is sincere or not. He tests him by penance. That test

may not discover the real status of the soul. Many a man has done penance whose heart is not sincere. The priest, however, cannot discover this and is liable to be deceived. But acting on his best judgment he thinks the suppliant genuine and says "I absolve thee." Now, as a matter of fact, he is not absolved. The priest and the church have forgiven him, but God has not done so. The whole matter then reverts back to the direct relation of the soul to God. Where the penitent is sincere and the priest has not made a mistake, God forgives and the priest is unnecessary. Where the priest is mistaken and pronounces absolution, the man has not been forgiven and the church has unintentionally, but nevertheless in reality, pronounced a lie in the name of God. In order to make priestcraft, at its best, harmonize with theology, we must eliminate its distinctively Christian view of the Divine and look upon God as possessed of those pagan characteristics which made him subject to human manipulation and attributed to him the weaknesses of faulty man.

But when we come to the rational analogies by which Roman Catholic teachers attempt to defend the practice of priestly intervention, we find that they are equally unsatisfactory. We quote again from Father Conway's Paulist Lectures to non-Catholics since they represent the most plausible interpretations of Romanism. The failure of Rome to promote direct dealing of the soul with God is justified by citation of cases in common life where the indirect method is employed. A case is supposed where the President of the United States should learn of irregularities in the Philippine Islands and commission twelve men, clothed with full judicial powers, to go over and investigate. In this case those men would be authorized to act for the President, and those whom they would adjudge guilty would be recognized as guilty by the United States; likewise those acquitted would be declared innocent just as truly as if the President himself were there in person. Now, the fallacy of this argument lies in the use of an imperfect analogy. The analogy be-

tween the President of the United States and the Divine Being fails at the point of supernatural powers. The President sends a commission to investigate and act because he is ignorant of the situation and cannot leave the White House to personally attend to the matter. God needs no such commissioners as the priests presume to be, since he himself knows all the facts better than any ecclesiastical commissioners, and he is present, dealing directly with the individual, when any question of guilt or innocence arises.

Again, argument for priestly intervention is made by an analogy of the army general and the private soldier. The question is asked, "Why does not a soldier report for duty directly to the commanding general?" The answer is that it is not the duty of a commanding general to receive individual reports of private soldiers. No general was ever appointed to that high office and then assigned to camp-gate duty, where he might check up the return of soldiers who might have been off on leave. That is the task of

a sergeant or some other subordinate officer. But the forgiveness of sins is not a subordinate task, it is the divine prerogative of the Almighty, and for him to assign such a task to a subordinate would be for him to surrender his high office of Judge and Saviour. The analogy utterly fails when it compares God's exclusive right of forgiveness with an inferior task to which a high official could not give himself without dereliction of duty.

Likewise the analogy fails between a governor and a tax-collector for the same reason. Father Conway asks, "Why does not a citizen pay his taxes directly to the governor of his State?" The plain answer is because the governor is elected to be a governor and not to be a tax-collector. When the citizens elect a man as governor they have not the remotest suspicion that he will devote his time to collecting taxes. That is no part of the gubernatorial function. He will, of course, have general supervision of the financial transactions of the State, but the voters expect him to appoint a local

internal revenue collector and not perform the duties of that office himself. The Romanist does not seem to be able to see that forgiveness of sins is a superior and not a subordinate task. The opponents of Jesus raised at least once a righteous inquiry when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And Jesus accepted their challenge when he forgave sins as evidence of his deity. For him to delegate this exclusively divine function to a human being would not be the assignment of a subordinate task to a subordinate officer, but it would be the transference of a divine prerogative to a mere man.

Now the spiritual heritage of Protestantism is a firm belief in the direct access of the soul to God and in forgiveness of sins as an attribute of God which he cannot delegate to a man. Consequently, Protestantism has no place in its creed or theology for a human intermediary. It opposes spiritual mediation not only because it believes it utterly contrary to the New Testament, but also because of the practical evils which it

generates. The whole trend of Christian progress is away from the idea of an intermediary. Superstition is a relic of the theory of intervention. Omens and signs and doctrines of devils are fostered by the notion that there are subordinate intermediaries between God and human life. Popular superstitions grow on this root. People hesitate to look at the moon over the left shoulder lest it indicate impending evil. The midnight wail of a house dog is regarded as an advance messenger announcing the approach of death. Fortune-tellers and the spiritualistic frauds who "peep and mutter" are all of the nature of intermediate forces between the Source of spiritual power and the human soul. How grandly these wretched superstitions are swept away as soon as we stress the glorious doctrine of Jesus that God as loving Father comes into closest and most immediate relation with the individual. "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered." "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Lo! I am with you alway." "I

will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." These sublime statements of the immediacy and immanence of God banish the superstitious folly that God would use the moon or the house dog or the spiritualistic faker as a medium of communication between himself and his loved child. The loving mother will not permit a competent and sympathetic nurse to come between her and her child. How much less will God, whose love passeth the love of women, tolerate the intervention of superstitious and erratic media between himself and his own!

Not only does superstition follow on the heels of spiritual intervention, but an unwholesome secrecy is also developed. Rome has a standing quarrel with freemasonry, and at least one ground of its opposition is that masonry requires secrecy of its members. But Rome seals the lips of all her priests and excuses them in withholding even knowledge of crime which the state should possess. Freemasonry is not a con-

fessional in any sense, and her secrets are not those of human conduct and law violation such as Rome receives and carefully conceals, but those of mere regulations of an organization which anyone may know who becomes a member. The confession of wrongdoing in the ear of a church which promises never to divulge, does not lead toward that openness and moral illumination for which Jesus was always contending. The Master insisted that truth leads to the light and that there is nothing secret that shall not be made manifest. The secretive spirit, the disposition to enshroud life in dark mystery, the hatred of public view and the love of sheltering dark where shrewd manipulations may be effected without fear of pitiless publicity are not productive of a sound morality nor a healthy spiritual life. Protestantism seeks the light and disparages all agencies of darkness. Her insistence on the right of every man to know, on the right of every conscience to assert itself and call to its bar all processes of life, and its open profession of allegiance with Him who is the

Light of this world and with whom is no darkness at all, make it utterly unsympathetic with the kind of secrecy which Roman Catholicism begets and fosters. Take a concrete case. Gipsy Smith in a recent evangelistic sermon told of an awakened conscience with which he was called to deal. In an after meeting he found a woman in great spiritual agony. He told her there must be some wrong which she was not willing to acknowledge. She said there was, and then told him that she had been a false witness in a famous court case wherein her testimony had ruined the reputation of an innocent man. The Gipsy told her that she must make acknowledgment and restitution. She said she could not bear the shame it would involve. But he said to her, "What am I to do? You have told me; I cannot retain a guilty silence and let this innocent man go on bearing a moral reproach." At last through prayer and conference she was brought to a state of willingness and then to a state of personal peace. The acknowledgment was made, the man was publicly

and legally acquitted of blame, and a victory for righteousness recorded in heaven and on earth. Now, suppose that confession had been made to a Roman Catholic priest, what would have resulted? That woman, while she might have suffered penance and received at length announcement of Rome's forgiveness, might still have left that moral stigma on the innocent man and the weight of injustice would have rested on the courts and the community. The priest could never have assumed the high level of moral rectitude and have declared, as did the Gipsy, "I cannot remain silent and share your guilty secret." It is not necessary to say that the moral progress of the world demands that everywhere the attitude of the Gipsy prevail and that the course officially required of the priest makes for every kind of retrogression. This heritage of light and moral rectitude which despises that moral shielding which begets moral weaklings, must be maintained and promoted if we are ever to rid the world of its social, commercial, industrial, political, and religious

wrongs and pave a path of spiritual sunlight for Him who is the brightness of his Father's glory.

We close this series of discourses with an emphasis of the constructive note which we have tried to sound all through. We can only drive out darkness with light and only truthful affirmations can drive out noisome negations. Over against Rome's elaborate system of intervention we desire to place in clear light the glorious directness of an experimentally authenticated gospel. Each Roman Catholic institution or sacrament founded on the principle of spiritual mediation has its counterpart in Protestantism founded on the principle of direct approach to God. Look at these.

Here is the confessional. Many Romanists find spiritual comfort therein which is not to be condemned, but over against the confessional and whatever peace it may bring we place the rich experience of justification by faith through direct access to God by Jesus Christ, which Protestantism has proclaimed and experienced through the cen-

turies. Charles Wesley came to justifying faith when he came to know Christ through full surrender of himself directly to the Saviour and went out with a new song in his heart which God had directly placed there and which prompted him to half a century of singing which has charmed the hearts of millions since his day. The hymnody of the confessional is certainly not large, to say the least. In other words, men have not found so rich and joyous a religious experience through confession to an earthly priest, obedience to his demands for penance, and the reception of his forgiving pronouncement, "I absolve thee," as they have through direct approach to God and simple faith in Jesus Christ the great high priest. The exaggerated figures which Charles Wesley uses in a stanza said to have been written to describe his joy in forgiveness through justifying faith stand out in contrast with the almost stoical reception of forgiveness through the confessional. Wesley sings:

"Fully justified I, I rode on the sky,
Nor envied Elijah his seat.

My soul mounted higher than a chariot of fire,
The moon, it was under my feet."

Or take the doctrine of penance. Protestantism knows nothing of penance chiefly because it rejects the artificial view of good works which Rome maintains. We never set men to doing things simply to test their sincerity, and therefore we have no place for pilgrimages and artificial mortifications of the flesh which have no value in themselves. We believe that worthy conduct is so valuable and there is so little time for the doing of all that should be done, that we never ask men to perform the intrinsically useless tasks of penance. We believe that genuine faith in Jesus which brings a man to immediate relation with his Lord will stimulate in him a desire to imitate his Master in going about doing good. We are concerned with the spirit in which a man does good deeds. We count it of little worth for him to give and toil and suffer simply that he may earn the approval of the church, if in his soul there be no moving impulse to fellowship with his loving Lord

in the supreme task of building his kingdom. We therefore tend to promote a more joyous practice of the art of Christian living. Christian living comes to be a joyous procedure. The Protestant learns not only to sing with Paul and Silas when in the agonies of persecution, but he cultivates the more natural joy which comes from viewing all life as a vast field of service wherein he walks in personal and immediate fellowship with his Master day by day as a colaborer with God.

The Bible thus becomes to the Protestant a handbook of life to which he goes each day, not as to a catechism to learn stiff doctrines, but as to a fountain from which he may take refreshing draughts of the water of life. The Bible is a devotional book to him. He commits a passage to memory, not that he may recite it in a confirmation class or a confessional, but that he may "meditate on it day and night" for the strengthening of his new life in Christ which came when he became a new creature through justifying faith. Hence he must have a copy of the

Bible for himself. He must read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest its truth; and while he does not despise the instruction which the church and the Bible class may give, yet that instruction will be of little value unless he be a constant and devotional reader of the Book. Now, while Roman Catholics in this country are permitted to read the Bible, it is no use denying that the personal perusal of the Book has never been encouraged by Rome, and in multitudes of instances has been positively prohibited. There is nothing in all Romanism corresponding to the British or the American Bible Society, and the activities of these agencies for the encouragement of individual reading of the Scriptures is decidedly opposed by the Roman Catholic Church. Protestantism offers the open Bible, without note or comment, and has been enabled to raise up a church of Bible readers. Its saints are not found handling a cross nor counting beads, but reading and meditating upon the inspired Word of God until their experience voices itself in the

language of Holy Writ, "O how love I thy law! . . . Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Nor has Protestantism need of the sacrament of extreme unction. This is not simply a means of spiritual comfort to the dying, it is an insistence on the need of the priestly intermediary for the soul's triumphant exit from this world. The Protestant minister goes also to the deathbed, but he goes only to pray for and with the dying and help them to find Christ as an immediate Presence to the soul. If they have already found him, he need only administer spiritual comfort, and in any case the Protestant pastor regards the ministrations at the deathbed of far less value than those bestowed in health when the mind is unclouded by the confusion of physical break-down. The priest is more eager for deathbed ministration than the Protestant, not because more sympathetic, but because of the demands of his theory. That theory insists that serious spiritual loss will ensue to saint as well as sinner unless the priest can intervene be-

tween that soul and God just before it passes into eternity. The Protestant is eager that every man shall know Christ personally before that hour, and then he needs no one but his Divine Redeemer as the night of death draws nigh.

Protestantism gives to the world its triumphant deathbeds, not because of any priestly ministrations, but because it leads its people into a conscious, personal acquaintance with Him who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. It teaches its men to so live that when death draws nigh they may have direct access to the Great High Priest whether or not there be any earthly friend near by to pray. It teaches them to sing:

“Thy stroke, O death, terror of the world, I hail;
’Twill snap my bonds and set me free,
Free to wing the vasty realms of being.
Inbreathe the freshest air of life
And bask me in the sunlight of eternal day.”

Its all-sufficiency for life as well as death is Jesus, whom the soul may reach directly

and immediately. Thus Charles Wesley sings as he approaches the dark valley:

“In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
Jesus, my only joy thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart.
O let me catch a smile from thee
And drop into eternity.”

Thus, discarding all necessity for an intervening priest at death, Protestantism certainly has no need for any such after passage into the other world. Purgatory is the attempt of the Roman Church to hold the souls of men in its power after they have left this world. It is perhaps the least reasonable of all Rome's doctrines. To suppose that God defers all direct dealing with the souls of men, even after they have passed into the other world, until a human priest has adjusted certain transactions with the friends of the departed on this side the grave would be absurd if it were not so serious. How contradictory that a soul passed into God's unseen world must await a message which God is sup-

posed to send back to an earthly priest before it can come to direct dealings with the Saviour! If there should be such a place as purgatory, surely God would be nearer to it than a priest living on this earth. What reason can justify belief in the theory that God, to whom the soul has gone, cannot deal with that soul directly and dispose of his case until human priests on this side have received word from God, acted in his stead and sent word back again to that soul in the unseen? Nothing but the exigencies of a theory, or the purpose to retain control over men in this life by pretending to keep that hold even after death, could ever justify reasonable men in believing such a preposterous and contradictory doctrine. How far removed is the New Testament conception! There we read, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord"; "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"—not purgatory. Surely, that dying thief had no human intermediary. Only the Saviour and himself were in that transaction, and though he was deep dyed

in sin the Master's forgiveness and infusion of new life sufficed to save him, and there is not the remotest suggestion of purgatorial purging but immediate entrance into paradise. It is this view of death which Protestantism maintains. It is this saving triumph over the fear of death which Protestantism has been instrumental in promoting. Thus Wesley, the Protestant, says as he draws near the close of life, "The best of all is, God is with us." Thus Cookman, the Protestant, sings as the sun goes down, "Sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb." Thus Moody, the Protestant, replies when asked how it is with him in the hour of death, "Earth is receding, heaven is opening; God is calling, I am going home." These men needed no extreme unction, they needed no purgatory; they had done no penance, but their lives had blossomed with good deeds and their only confessional was the place of prayer where they did "acknowledge and bewail their manifold sins and wickedness" directly to Him who is able to save unto the utter-

most all that come unto God by him, for they had found the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

The need of Protestantism to-day is that she shall understand the importance to the world of her own promotion and that she shall openly defend herself. It is far easier to criticize Protestantism than it is to criticize Romanism. The Roman Church severely rebukes all her critics. For this reason she has scarcely any within her own ranks, and she succeeds in silencing many critics without. As a consequence, many of the critics of the Roman system are those whose courage has degenerated into a kind of rabid rashness, and as they have but little reputation for intellectual poise to lose, they say many things which a more reputable but equally strong antagonist of Rome would hesitate to utter. Many a man, therefore, who sees the folly and un-Americanism of the Roman system, hesitates to speak because he prizes so highly his own reputation for moral sanity and brotherliness. Not only so, but Protestantism has a genius for

independent criticism and finds great satisfaction in pointing out her own faults. While this is wholesome, it may lead us to excess. Like any other good it is subject to perversion. Consequently the deficiencies of Protestantism receive excessive advertising while her fundamental excellencies are often obscured. Just reflect on the condemnation which Protestantism received at the hand of Billy Sunday. Much of the criticism of individuals and churches was deserved, but the condemnation as a whole was a wild exaggeration. The critic himself was a loyal Protestant, and if he had once trained his guns of fiery invective on the faults of Romanism, her ecclesiastical structure would have looked like the cathedral at Rheims after its desecration. But he did not do so. It was often remarked that the Roman Catholic Church was the only thing he did not criticize. His ministry in New York city was received by multitudes of Romanists. They, of course, heard his ringing gospel messages, but they also heard his condemnations of Protestant ministers and

church members, and without a word of suggestion that Rome was equally inconsistent, they could only conclude that Protestantism was very much of a failure to say the least. Lesser evangelists have pursued the same course. Nearly all magazine articles and public addresses breathe the free air of Protestant inquiry and criticism and the total impression left on Roman Catholics who never hear their own church criticized within its own ranks is that Protestantism is a broken reed. Moreover, there has been a fatuous notion in the minds of many popular speakers and writers that the best way to cure Rome's wrongs is to conciliate her, and Protestant ministers have often gone out of their way to laud Romanism and set her up as an example to Protestant churches. But Rome only makes these mistaken brethren her dupes. She publishes their conciliating remarks in her attacks on Protestantism and by implication holds these men up to ridicule for staying in a church which is so far below the heights which Romanism has reached! It

is futile to try to conciliate Rome, just as it is useless and wicked to indulge in vituperation and slander. What is needed is that we shall speak the truth with sanity and with soberness, that we forsake the temporizing policy of timidity whereby we have condemned Protestantism with faint praise; that we honestly acknowledge the indebtedness of American freedom of mind, of conscience and of religion to Protestantism and soberly see the inherent hostility of official Romanism to such liberty; that we cease extenuating Rome's low ideals of life on the ground that she reaches thereby the rougher elements of society and that we plant our feet firmly on the truth that it takes the highest to really reach the lowest; that we recognize the endeavor of Protestantism to build the kingdom of God on earth, in social, industrial, and political realms, while we see that Rome is chiefly occupied with building her own institution and getting men into another world, and that, finally, while we shall cease to "see red" whenever Romanism is mentioned, we shall come to see that

Protestantism is the only form of Christianity which enables us to "see white" as we search among the dark problems of the day for genuine solution.

We have no desire to discount whatever is good in Romanism. Her belief in the deity of Jesus, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the atoning work of the Saviour is to be commended. We differ in the interpretations of these truths. We have tried in this series to build rather than to pull down, and we have sought in our condemnation of what we feel to be wrong to follow the poet's vision of the "waster" and the "builder," praying the Great Head of the church that soon the whole dream may come to be true—

"I look, aside the mist has rolled,
The waster seems the builder too;
Upspringing from the ruined old
I see the new!

"'Twas but the ruin of the bad,
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had,
Is living still."

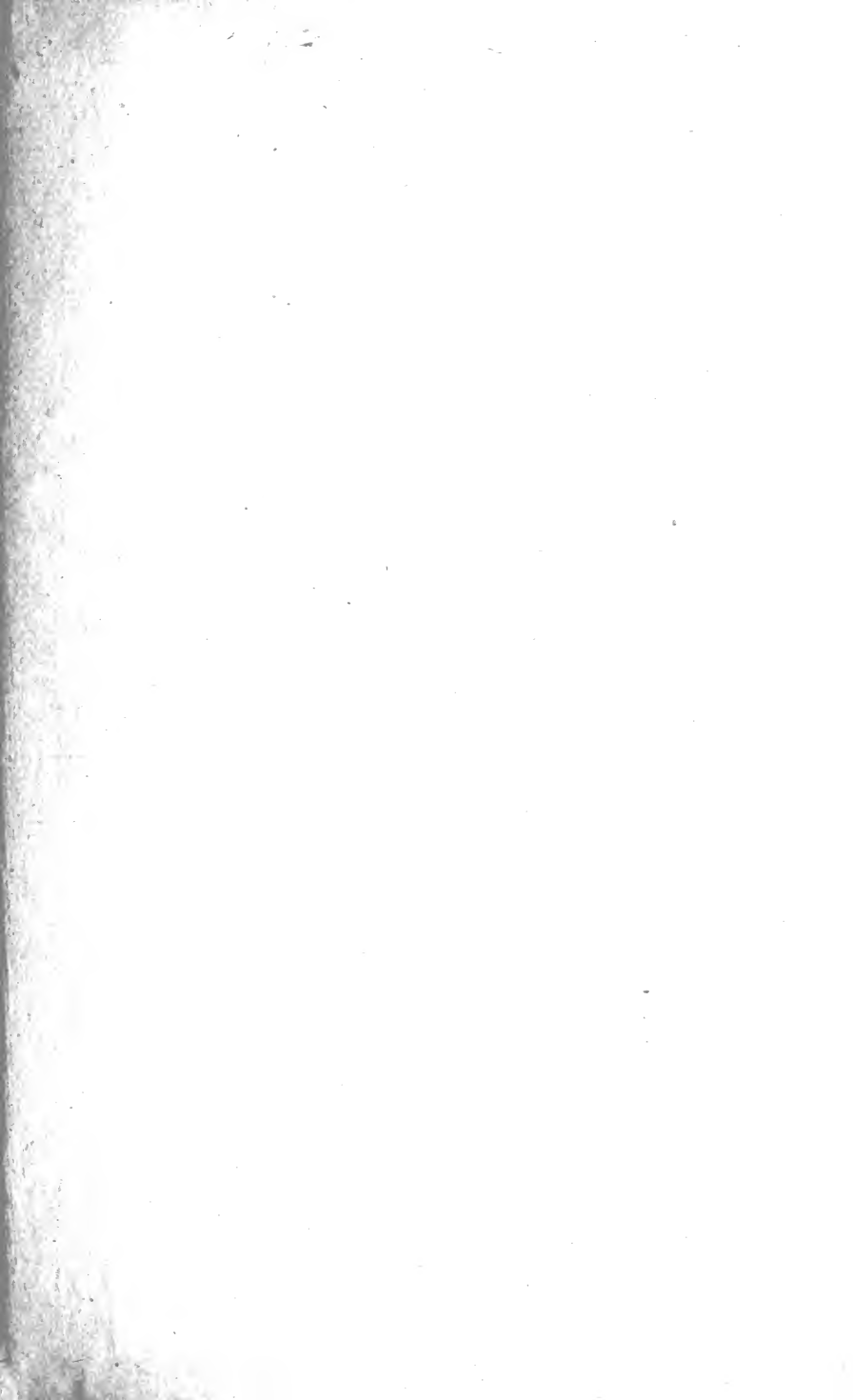


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